



**Hampshire
& Isle of Wight**
FIRE & RESCUE SERVICE

Simon Packer
Headquarters
Leigh Road
Eastleigh
Hampshire
SO50 9SJ

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e. [REDACTED]
w. hantsfire.gov.uk

To Whom it may concern,

Every year, Hampshire and Isle of Wight Fire & Rescue Service (HIWFRS) responds to a significant number of wildfires in the New Forest District Council area. There is evidence that a significant number of these fires are caused by either open fires or disposable barbecues. This year has seen a dramatic rise in the number and seriousness of rural fires attended, due to a combination of factors, including the changing climate.

The New Forest is primarily protected by a fleet of 13 main pumping appliances. These are crewed by On-Call staff who respond to station on receipt of a call from their home or normal place of work. Each time an appliance is deployed, it costs the service and therefore the public purse £317 for each hour or part hour that it is deployed, the cost to local business' who allow their employees to respond should also be borne in mind. Many incidents use 5 or 6 of these main pumping appliances and can take several hours to resolve. It removes these appliances from our available fleet for the duration of that call and should there be a significant property fire, road traffic collision or other emergency, HIWFRS may have a delayed response due to the non-availability of the local stations. Fires in the open in the New Forest area cost HIWFRS approximately £100,000 each year. This year, the cost is expected to be significantly increased.

HIWFRS fully supports the concept of a Public Space Protection Order (PSPO) restricting the use of barbecues and open fires. Whilst we do not wish to encroach on the enjoyment of people who visit the New Forest, our current level of activity to incidents in the open is not sustainable. We support some exemptions to a PSPO, such as the Scout Association activity sites that have a dedicated area for fires with a suitable and sufficient written risk assessment, with appropriate control measures in place.

Yours Sincerely

Simon Packer

Station Commander New Forest (West)

Hampshire and Isle of Wight Fire and Rescue Service